

Crystal Lake Businesses 1977-2020

(Locations listed from present to past)

From the NW side of town moving east:

Flowerwood Nursery, NW corner of Rts. 14 & 176-They were at this location from about 1968 until Dec 2020 when they closed. They were originally on Crystal Lake Ave as Schramm's Wholesale Florist and were family owned by the Schramms, Ahrens, and Siegmeiers.

Empty land at SW corner of Rts 14 and 176-was to be the Holiday Inn (proposed in late 1980's) but the land was too boggy/wet to support that size structure.

Arising Church-Rt 14 just east of Rt 176-FS Farm Service building, then Westlanes Bowling. In the old farming days, a pond may have been where the building is currently located, which is why Rt. 14 curves slightly there.

Bethesda Resale Shop, NE corner of Rts 14 & 176-former Amish Furniture Store before it moved east to Rt. 14 just east of McHenry Ave.

Brilliance Honda Car Dealership Rt 176 just east of Rt 14-Viking Dodge dealership.

Mercy Health Rehab on Rt 176 west of Nicor Gas-former offices of Drs. Gary Oberg and Z. Ted Lorenc.

Hawthorn Storage, Rt 176 just east of train viaduct-Skinner Amusements home & business.

Empty brick building, NE corner of Rt 176 & Park Ave-former Precision Twist factory.

Empty lot, SW corner of Rt 176 & Erick St-Flying J Gas Station (cheapest one in town during mid 1980's)

Casey's Gas, SW corner Rt. 176 & Terra Cotta Rd/Pingree Rd-Originally a farmhouse and barn, it was then Toolmaster's, then a playground equipment store, then Crystal Lake Rib House.

The Whiskey Bungalow on Rt. 176 just west of Rt. 31 was originally Walker's Country Kitchen Restaurant, a popular restaurant in the 1970's and early 1980's.

Condos/townhomes being built on Rt 31 just north of ComEd-this was the Crystal Lake Ambutal, similar to what we now call an "immediate care medical center."

Anderson BMW/Mazda, Rt 31 just north of Rt 176-was Anderson Volkswagen.

Walgreens, NE corner of Rt 31 and Rt 176-Little John's Sandwich Shop's second location.

Mobil Gas/Tommy's Restaurant, SW corner of Rts 176 & 31-Tareydale Restaurant.

Former Brilliance Honda, Rt 31 just south of Rt 176 was the former Pauly Toyota.

Moving from the NE side of town southward:

U-Haul Dealer at NE corner Rts. 31 and 14-Follett Book Factory.

D'Andrea Banquets at SE corner Rts 31 and 14-Branded Steak House 1965-1983, then Hob Nob restaurant. Before Branded Steak House there was a gas station & BBQ place there called Marie's Place and later the Crystal Y Restaurant.

Home Depot/H.H. Gregg, SE corner of Rts 31 & 14-Twin Ponds mini golf (referred to by teens as Twin Puddles) and the Broken Drum restaurant. The Broken Drum's motto was "You can't beat it!". Later, the Broken Drum was called Coleman's White Buffalo. It had the area's first make your own pizza bar!

Empty lot at NE corner of Rt 14 & Sands Rd-the Crystal RV dealership in the 1970's and 80's

An empty lot sits north of the NW corner Rts 31 and 14 on Cog Circle. Between Think Ink & Space Mngt. Storage, it was where the Silver Dollar restaurant was located.

Think Ink, just north of NW corner Rts 31 & 14, began as a place for live theater entertainment for patrons of the Silver Dollar restaurant in 1965. By the late seventies it was the Unity Church, and in 1992 it became the home of Think Ink. (Info courtesy of Klara Kaiser-Think Ink)

Portillo's and Texas Roadhouse, NW corner of Rts 31 and 14 were the Arnold Palmer's mini golf course, which directly competed with Twin Ponds located kitty corner across the intersection of Rts. 31 and 14. I believe Arnold Palmer's was there first but not sure.

Outback Steakhouse & Chuck E. Cheese's at the SW corner of Rts 31 and 14 were where the Crystal Lake Manor Motel and its' swimming pool were located.

Heading west on Rt 14:

Around The Clock Restaurant-SE corner of Rt 14 & Pingree Rd: Originally the site of the Auto-Dine Restaurant in 1957, carhops were added in 1958. The Auto-Dine closed in the early 1970's and the building was vacant until 1975 when the property was purchased. The Auto-Dine was demolished and Around The Clock was built about 1975, then expanded in 1997.

Townhomes on Pingree Rd just south of Rt 14 near Drive-In Lane were where the Crystal Lake outdoor movie theater was. It began showing pornographic films about 1978 and was later closed after numerous complaints from homeowners in the adjacent Manor subdivision.

Regal Cinemas, Rt 14 was the location of the "new" movie theater, Showplace I and II, number 3 being the old original theater downtown on Williams St (now the Raue.) The Showplace Theater was actually located in what is now the middle of the Regal Cinemas parking lot, and had parking in front of and behind the movie theater. It was demolished and the new Regal building built further back on the property. My husband and I had our first date at Showplace I & II in 1981.

Jersey Mike's/T-Mobile strip mall building, Rt 14 east of Pingree-There was a 2-story brick professional building with a marriage counselor in it before it was demolished for the strip mall.

Rt 14 & Pingree Road, cont.

Jameson's Charhouse, NE corner of Rt 14 & Pingree Rd. was originally Ben Pingree's Bar B-Q Stand, then his tavern and rental cabins with Bozo the black bear for entertainment. In the 80's or 90's it was known as Sneakers Bar & Cafe. The buildings were demolished to build Jameson's.

ReMax/American Mattress/Gipper at SW corner of Rt 14 & Pingree was the Switzer Boats building. Switzer built award winning speed and pleasure boats.

Harvest Bible Chapel, NW of Rt 14 & Pingree Rd. on Tracy Trail was originally the indoor soccer facility before they moved west of town to Ridgefield Rd in Ridgefield, IL.

Volkswagen dealership on south side of Rt 14 across from Bohl Marketplace was where the Conlon-Collins Ford (and later Jeep) dealership was located. We bought 3 Jeeps from there. My brother in law worked at Conlon-Collins from 1982 until they closed.

Continuing west on Rt. 14:

Bohl Marketplace land was originally the old white Bohl Farmhouse (with a big bay window on the front) and the family farm, which was overgrown and in disrepair in the 80's and early 90's.

FIX Auto was originally Total Car/Total Care in the early to mid 1980's. It was painted fuschia pink to attract people's attention, but many residents thought it was unbecoming.

Two empty buildings, just demolished (between FIX Auto & Cassidy Tire), were the 2nd? Pauly Toyota on the east and LeWalt Glass on the west before LeWalt moved to Virginia Rd. Cutoff.

Cassidy Tire on Rt 14 was Pumps Tire & Battery and before that Crystal Lake Tire & Battery.

The large empty building in Crystal Court shopping center was Big Lots! and originally the Service Merchandise department store when the shopping center was built in the late 80's-early 90's?

The huge empty parking lot in back, where Nissan parks its' overstock of cars, was the original Wal-Mart and Cub Foods location.

Now an empty lot across from Sam's Club, this was the Colonial Ice Cream's second location. The building was originally the Bakers Square restaurant when the shopping center was new.

Nearby, the PNC bank and Buffalo Wild Wings were the location of Frank's Nursery and Crafts.

McDonald's at Rt 14 & Crystal Point Dr. was built about 1980. A large fir tree was brought from Lake Zurich, IL and planted on the west side of the building. It was written about in the Crystal Lake Herald. This McDonald's had indoor seating while the other original one on west Rt 14 did not. The tree was later removed when it became sickly and McDonald's built a Playplace addition.

Just west of McDonald's across Crystal Point Dr. is the Chase Bank. This was originally the Marengo Federal Savings and Loan building.

On the north side of Rt 14 is Helzberg Diamonds, which was the Boston Market restaurant, but had previously been the Sizzlers Steak House in the 1970's and early 1980's.

Rt 14 in front of Crystal Point Shopping Center/Crystal Point Mall

5 Guys/Starbucks building was originally the Golden Bear restaurant in the 70's and 80's, then it became the first Colonial Ice Cream location. Golden Bear served breakfast and other foods, similar to an IHOP.

Arby's at Rt 14 and Main St was originally Arthur Treacher's Fish & Chips, then Jack the Ribber Restaurant.

Crystal Point Shopping Center/former Crystal Point Mall, NE corner of Rt. 14 & Main St. The Mall was built about 1976 and has been remodeled from an indoor mall to an outdoor shopping center. When built in 1976, it was a popular destination for indoor shoppers who didn't want to travel the distance to the indoor malls of Randhurst (Mt. Prospect, opened 1962) or Woodfield Mall (Schaumburg, opened Sept 1971). Spring Hill Mall in West Dundee would open in 1979 and prove to be a competitor for Crystal Point Mall.

Best Buy was originally Dominick's Foods before it moved to Bohl Marketplace
Steinhafel's was originally the Robert Hall Village store, and in late 1977/early 1978 became K-Mart. TJ Maxx was one of two C.L. Sports Authority stores, but originally was the Joseph Spiess store which was a luxury department store whose original location was in Elgin, IL.

Some of the stores inside the Mall during the 1980's (from west to east) were:
Stitchin' Sisters, Steven Edwards mens clothes, Habersham Plantation, Kinney Shoes, The Machine arcade game center, the Leather Shop, Merle Norman cosmetics, an eye doctor, various clothing stores, Browse A'Round Books, Minnesota Fabrics, and a luggage store. Noah's Ark Pet Shop and a Fireplace Store were there also. People could exit K-mart on the west and walk east through the entire mall, entering Joseph Spiess on the east. There were also entrances on the north near The Machine and the south near Merle Norman and the eye doctor.

Home State Bank's second location at SE Rt 14 & Main was the original location of the Rosenthal red brick farmhouse.

The McHenry County Conservation District Prairie Trail, which crosses under Rt 14 just west of Main St., was a railway line leading from Elgin into downtown Crystal Lake and north to McHenry. The train tracks were dangerously close to the intersection, and cars heading east on Rt. 14 would often get stuck on the tracks when the traffic light turned red. When that section of railway became the Prairie Trail, an underpass was built under Rt. 14 to accommodate bicycle and pedestrian traffic in a safer manner.

The new 7-11 convenience store/gas station at the SE corner Rt 14 and Teckler Ave was where Teddy's Liquors was.

The SW corner of Rt. 14 and Teckler Ave, currently a GMC auto dealership since the early/mid 1990's, was the Martinetti Motel and TC Spirits Restaurant and other restaurants before that. My family had Easter brunch at Martinetti's in April 1978. About 1982 those building were demolished and September's Restaurant was built there. My wedding reception was held there in June 1985.

Behind the GMC dealership is a self storage facility. Originally known as The Keep, it had a medieval knight at its entrance. Now it's called Cube Smart. Across Teckler Ave is the Trading Post store, which was the Dolly Madison Thrift Store.

Rt 14 & Teckler Ave:

Across Rt. 14 on the north side are busy shopping centers. Hobby Lobby was the Venture store. Jewel Foods (Crystal Lake's 4th Jewel store location) is where the Handy Andy home improvement store was. Burlington Coat Factory was Marshall's on the north, Toys 'R' Us on the south. Prior to those stores it was Jewel Foods location #3, which faced into the parking lot instead of toward Rt 14. The poor visibility from the traffic on Rt 14 prompted the building of Jewel #4 on the old Handy Andy property.

All of these stores, and the new Immanuel Lutheran School behind them were once the Pure Oil building/property. The Pure Oil building was used by McHenry County College as their first location, until they built the college west of town on the Weber farm at Rt 14 & Lucas Rd. It was fully operational by 1975/76. In the late 1970's/early 1980's the Pure Oil building was still standing. It was an eyesore, an empty shell subject to frequent vandalism.

Continuing west on Rt 14:

Before the building of Mariano's Foods, this site was a Sears store and originally Montgomery Wards which faced north parallel to Rt. 14. Many teens called it "Monkey Wards."

In the Crystal Lake Plaza, north side of Rt 14 there are many small stores. This shopping center was damaged by the 11 April 1965 tornado which occurred on Palm Sunday and also destroyed the young Colby Subdivision to the north of it. Five residents perished that day.

From west to east some of the stores have been:

New Balance was the First National Bank of CL, Nelson's Jewelry, the Crystal Lake Roller Rink (before moving to Virginia Rd cutoff), Pinemoor Pizza in the "V" (originally at 485 Lake St. until they had a fire there about 1978-79?), Midwest Outpost clothing, Western Auto until they had a fire, then it became True Value Hardware and Sunny Eng's Restaurant. The Irish Boutique was Maggie's Irish Imports. There was Radio Shack, New Life Christian Bookstore, Singer Sewing Machines and Eagle Grocery Store, which later became Joseph's Marketplace. These were some of the businesses at the Plaza.

In front of the CL Plaza along the north side of the bend in Rt 14 are: the IHOP restaurant which was Wag's restaurant (owned by the Walgreen Drug Store chain.) The Associated Bank was the Home Federal Savings Bank of Elgin. Before the brick building was built, this bank was housed in an old farmhouse at that site. Auto Zone is where Little John's Sandwiches' original location was at. Fannie Mae Candies was originally a gas station, although I can't remember which one, maybe Sunoco? Across from Fannie Mae's is a Convenient Store at Rt 14 & Devonshire Ln. This was originally a 7-11.

At the SE corner of Rt 14 and Virginia Rd is a Walgreens Drug Store. This was the longtime site of the John Evans Inn restaurant, from about 1967 to its closing in 2001. They closed due to violations regarding selling liquor to minors. Before John Evans opened, the building had been the Czecho Lodge and had served delicious Kolachy cookies. The Czecho Lodge assisted during the April 1965 C.L. tornado devastation, which occurred at the Plaza and the Colby Subdivision.

Rt 14 cont.

Across Virginia Rd is the CVS Pharmacy. This area was originally the farm of Anson Thompson from at least the 1870's through the 1890's or later. When I moved to CL in April 1978 this farmhouse had a long covered front porch on it. It faced southeast toward Virginia Rd and was teal colored. It was the home of Fuhler Real Estate before it was demolished.

A note regarding Virginia Rd: Parts of Rt 14 through Crystal Lake are known as Northwest Highway on the east, Virginia Street in the middle, and Route 14 on the west.

Country Corners Shopping Center, Rt 14 and Keith Ave

Some stores from west to east: Community Donations & Savers, which was Best Buy and before that Zayre. The Zayre was a chain store, similar to K-mart or Wal-Mart and closed about 1986. There was a Hallmark Card store and Fayva Shoes (my future husband worked there in 1979/1980) as well as an Electrolysis office and a weight loss clinic. El Niagara restaurant was there until at least 2000/2001? On the east end, where Dollar Tree is, was the location of Jewel/Osco Store #2. My first part time job was cashiering at Osco in 1979, when they had separate cash registers from the Jewel section of the store. Payless Shoe Store, empty now and east of Jewel, was originally a laundromat.

The current Burger King on Rt. 14 across from Coventry Ln. was there even in the late 1970's, although it has been remodeled a few times. My husband worked there as a teen in 1978 and 1979.

The Chilos/Carlos 3 Restaurant was Crystal Lake's original Pizza Hut restaurant. It was very popular from the 1970's forward until pizza chain restaurants with faster cooking times and much cheaper prices began to edge them out. Their pizza was better than other local Pizza Huts. A take-out only Pizza Hut is now located near Hobby Lobby.

Continuing west on Rt. 14:

The O'Reilly Auto Parts store was originally an old farmhouse on Rt. 14 just west of Pizza Hut.

Across the street is the Fifth Third Bank. Built about 1979, it was originally the second location of the First National Bank of Crystal Lake.

Just west of Fifth Third Bank is the Amish Furniture Gallery's second location. Before the Amish Gallery it was Cardinal Liquors' second location, and in the late 70's/early 80's it was the Jewel Outlet for overstock of non-food items sold at Jewel/Osco Stores. I believe it was another grocery store (A&P maybe?) before that.

Many years prior, it had been the farm of Christ Pfeiffer who ran his sand/gravel/ice harvesting business from there. The building where Heartland Home Medical Supply & Mattress One is located belonged to Mr. Pfeiffer. He kept his equipment in it. From the rear on Linn Ave you can see the bowed roof to keep snow from accumulating. The land on Linn Ave was part of the farm, and Mr. Pfeiffer had it subdivided to give lots to his children.

The original town of Crystal Lake was approximately McHenry Ave (called Dundee Rd) on the east, just south of Lake Ave on the south to just west of Florence Ave on the west, and just north of Rt 14 on the north. In/near these boundaries are:

Corners of Rt 14 and McHenry Ave:

NE corner is now Popeye's Restaurant but the site was Coventry Motors used cars for over 40 years, as well as a separate dry cleaners behind it to the north.

SE corner recently reopened as Amoco Gas Station but was Standard Gas in the 70's and 80's.

SW corner has been Ron's Service Center for many years, originally ARCO Gas Station.

NW corner is now Goodyear Auto Tech but the site originally had a building which was a furniture store in the early 2000's, the first Cardinal Liquors before that, and a grocery store before that. The double grocery door entrances were still there in 2002.

Rt 14 just west of McHenry Ave:

The southernmost part of the Tradewinds Cove Birkenstock Store (next to Insure One) was actually Jake's Pizza in the late 70's/early 80's. Just west of Tradewinds Cove is the 3 Chefs Catering, originally a Convenient food store. Across the street, Tommy's Restaurant was the Italian U-Boat sub sandwich shop.

The 1776 Restaurant was the site of the original Kentucky Fried Chicken until KFC built their new building further east on Rt 14 in front of Venture (now Hobby Lobby.) My husband worked at the old KFC as a teen in 1981, when he also was an EMT on the Crystal Lake Fire/Rescue Squad and a high school junior and senior.

The Exxon gas station on the SE corner of King St. was a Union 76 Gas Station with the rotating orange ball on their sign. Behind them is a small building which is now In-Sync Systems, but was the CL Food Pantry, and before that a pet shelter.

Across the street, Vine & Plate Wine Bar was Jaster's Bar from 2012-2019. Before that in the 1990's it was The Essential Health Foods. The original owner of the building was Mr. Jaster, a grocer, whose name appears on the front of the building near the roof. This building, built before 1920? is one of the oldest remaining in the original area of Crystal Lake. Just west is a Taco Bell restaurant which in 1892 was the site of the Crystal Lake Hotel. I believe that hotel was a stagecoach stop in the old days.

The strip of stores along the north side of Rt 14 across from McCormick Park has had many tenants. I think one of the most well remembered is Paul Marsh Pharmacy and Ostomy World (which is now called Medical World.)

The other is Haznow's Restaurant (at the west end) which was opened about 1927 by John/Jack Haznow and his wife, Dora. In the 1930's it was known as Haznow's Lakeside Tavern. Former Crystal Lake Country Club chef, Eng Sun, "Sunny Eng" became Haznow's chef in 1957. The restaurant was a family affair, and when Jack died in 1959 his son, Francis/Frank "Doc" took over. Doc was the founder of the Doc Haznow's Chili Open, a golf game played on the frozen Crystal Lake each year. Doc sold the business in 1982, and Sunny Eng opened his own restaurant in the Crystal Lake Plaza. Later, in the 1990's Haznow's became Porter's Oyster Bar. It had a "speakeasy decor" which was ironic, as it was reported that when it was Haznow's Chicago gangsters stopped there on their way to Lake Geneva, WI. After Porter's closed it was briefly Perry Moy's Plum Garden II. Unfortunately, that didn't last long. Then it re-opened again, this time as Mookie's Steak & Seafood. Many restaurants have been in the building, but none has had the lasting success of Haznow's!

Rt 14 near Dole Ave, heading west:

In the late 1800's the post office for Crystal Lake was in a building at Rt 14 and Florence St, now the site of a Mobil Gas Station. Later the post office found a new home on Minnie St and then in the 1990's another post office was built on Congress Parkway off of Main St.

At the NW corner of Rt 14 and Dole Ave is the parking lot for Andy's Restaurant, but originally this lot had a light grey clapboard 2 story old house on it. It was the home of the Crystal Lake Answering Service in the 1970's and 1980's.

Dole Avenue was named after C.S. Dole, who ran a railroad spur line from downtown Nunda (Crystal Lake's) train station south down Dole Avenue to his lakeside home for guests attending his daughter's wedding. Then the railway line was used to transport harvested ice on train cars back to the main line and send them down to Chicago. Mr. Dole's mansion is still located at the southeast end of the lake.

Near Rt 14 & Dole Ave

On the SW corner is Mister A's Beef Restaurant which has been there since 1977 or before. West of there is The Freeze ice cream store and the Crystal Lake Motel which have both also been there since before 1977.

The empty grassy lot between The Freeze and the Motel, currently where Layla's Birdhouses sets up temporary quarters, was actually the site of Crystal Lake's first McDonald's Restaurant. It had a drive thru and outdoor seating, but no seating indoors until they added an old refurbished train car to the building. This was sometime in the late 80's or early 90's. With the two newer McDonald's (across from Crystal Point Mall and at Rts 176 & 31) and difficulty turning left/northwest onto Rt 14, a McDonald's was built in the gas station at the NW corner of Rts 176 and 14. The train car was taken away and the old original McDonald's was demolished.

The Freeze and the Motel property were once part of the James Crow estate (later the Selz estate of Selz Shoe Manufacturer fame.) The original home for that estate, built circa 1858? is still located at 186 Lake Shore Dr (formerly West St.)

South section of town:

Virginia Road was known as the "Virginia Road Cutoff" or just "the Cutoff." It led outside of town to Pyott Rd and Rt. 31 for those traveling southeast. There was no Rakow Rd.

The Crystal Lake School District 155 building on Virginia Rd. was originally The Raquetball Club in the early 1980's.

Coleman's at Virginia Rd Cutoff and Three Oaks Rd was Frank 'N Furters Hot Dog Stand. The house just east of it may have been a one room schoolhouse, as one is noted on old maps of that area.

South side of Crystal Lake, cont.

Three Oaks Rd went east from the Virginia Rd Cutoff over Main St. through the Vulcan Lakes Gravel Pits (now Three Oaks Recreation Center), crossing over Pingree Rd and continuing east through the Manor subdivision, crossing over Rt. 31, and heading east to Cary crossing over Rt. 14. When Vulcan Lakes ended their lease with the City of Crystal Lake, the road through the gravel pits was demolished and then turned into the recreation center. Curran Construction had its' building at the Northeast corner of Three Oaks Rd and Main St, now an empty lot.

Lake In The Hills Airport was the Crystal Lake Airport. A tornado narrowly missed it, damaging homes just southwest in Lake in the Hills in April 1980.

The original Coventry subdivision was built by Ladd Homes in the early to mid 1960's northeast of Dartmoor Dr and McHenry Ave. The homes were specifically promoted to airline pilots. The real estate office for the lots was an old farmhouse on Rt 14, about where Coventry Lane intersects. When my family moved to Crystal Lake on 1 April 1978 we had bought our 12 year old Coventry home on Buckingham Drive from the original owner, an airline pilot.

St. Elizabeth Ann Seton Church was built adjacent to the Coventry subdivision, at the NE corner of McHenry Ave & Dartmoor Dr. The parish was begun in late 1978. Parishioners met first in South High School's theater until the church was completed in 1982. I was married there in 1985. Before St. Elizabeth Ann Seton, Crystal Lake's Catholics worshipped at the "new" St. Thomas at Rt. 176 and Oak St or the "old" St. Thomas located on Pierson St.

Crystal Lake South High School:

The original Crystal Lake Community High School became severely overcrowded, implementing an open campus program and staggered start/release times to accommodate the excess of students. I attended part of my freshman year there from April to June 1978, starting at 9:30 am and ending at 4pm.

A former farm had been selected south of town on McHenry Ave SW of Dartmoor Dr. as the site of a new high school. The old high school became known as C.L. Central and the new one being built as C.L. South. It opened its' doors on Tuesday, September 5, 1978. Some of the restrooms were not operable yet. There wasn't any stadium seating for football games, so even into the early 1980's South's home games were played at Central's football field when they were playing away games elsewhere. My future husband and I met and dated at C.L. South and graduated from there in the 3rd and 4th graduating classes, 1981 & 1982.

In/near Downtown Crystal Lake:

This area was originally called Nunda, and later North Crystal Lake. It was bounded by what is now Rt. 176 on the north, Main St on the east, Crystal Lake Ave on the south and Walkup Ave on the west. There have been many changes over the last 40 years or so, but I have tried to include the most well known.

Fire Station #2 (unmanned) was in the yellow brick building behind the old City Hall at the SE corner of Main St. & Beardsley St. The old city hall building is now Akasha Yoga.

Duke's Alehouse was Cat Ballou's Saloon (restaurant)

The commuter train parking lot on Woodstock St between Walkup Ave and Minnie St was the old wooden lumber sheds belonging to Alexander Lumber before they moved to Virginia Rd cutoff near Rakow Rd (now vacant) and then out to Country Club Rd just northwest of Ridgefield.

Downtown C.L. cont:

The Home State Bank Operations Building on Minnie St was the old post office in Crystal Lake until the new one was built out on Congress Parkway just north of the Crystal Point Mall.

At the SW corner of Grant and Center Sts was an old 2 story house where Full Cyrkle Records was located before they moved near the SE corner of Rts. 176 & 31. Their business declined when music CD's became popular. Now this area is the Grant St. Parking Lot.

The Raue Theater on N. Williams St. was movie theater Showplace III in the late 70's and 80's. My future husband gave me my engagement ring there on March 17, 1984 when we came to see the movie "Footloose" during a severe snowstorm. Just north of there, now incorporated into the theater as its' box office, was the Baskin Robbins Ice Cream Store.

The Brink Street Market stores on the north side, adjacent to the Raue, were where the Jewel Food Store was in Crystal Lake before moving to site #2 at Rt 14 & Keith Ave. I remember exiting from the Showplace Theater at nighttime on the NW side of the building and having to step carefully around the concrete footings from the old Jewel so I didn't trip over them. Across the street from Showplace III was Don & Lu's Children Store (later Steven Edwards 2nd location) and Cadieux' Bakery, now the Clip Joynt.

Willow Creek Community Church, 100 S. Main St. was the former Oak Manufacturing complex which employed many Crystal Lake residents.

The Crystal Lake Antique Mall was the Flagg and Sons Funeral Home before they merged with Querhammer in the 1990's, and hidden behind its' facade is an old original frame home. Mrs. Flagg still owns the building and antique mall on the NW corner of Williams St and Crystal Lake Ave. There is a candy store there too. The multiple garages located across the street behind Crystal Lake Health Foods were used as garages for the Flagg funeral hearses. (Info courtesy Dave Childress)

Crystal Lake Health Foods has been at 25 E. Crystal Lake Ave since the 1970's. I worked there from 1995-2000. Manager/Certified Nutritionist Dave Childress has worked there since about 1979.

The 2 story dark grey house at 35 E. Crystal Lake Ave, the SW corner of Williams and CL Ave, now Apex Project Management, was owned by the same family as CL Health Foods, and during the mid 1980's and early 1990's was home to the Dollar Video store. It rented VHS movies for \$1 each. Later, it housed Stitchin' Sisters before they eventually moved to Brink St and became Welcome Stitchery.

At 110 W. Woodstock St, just west of downtown C.L., is the former Singer Sewing Company building which now houses Boss Office Products and other tenants. Like Oak Manufacturing, Singer employed many Crystal Lake residents.

Across the street from Singer, the empty lot bordered by Woodstock St and Dole Ave was the home of the Crystal Lake Police Department, as well as the Crystal Lake Fire/Rescue Station #1. Later in 2004, the new City Hall/Police & Fire Depts. were built on a large area of land just a little further east on Woodstock St., where the former Dole Ave. railroad spur line used to intersect with the railway tracks to Chicago.

Conclusion:

When my family moved to Crystal Lake on 1 April 1978 it's population was about 25,000 people within the city limits. The largest city in the county, it had many more businesses than its' distant neighbors. In the days before fast food chains and big box stores dotted every town, customers from the surrounding towns of Algonquin, Huntley, Harvard, Woodstock, McHenry, Cary, Fox River Grove and even Barrington would drive to shop in Crystal Lake, as well as to bowl, play mini golf, attend the movie theaters, use the Crystal Lake beaches, etc.

Crystal Lake's phenomenal growth spurt in the 1980's and 1990's led to the widening of Rt 14 with 2 lanes in each direction and separate turn lanes. It also led to the building of a third high school, Prairie Ridge, on the north side of town, as well as the sale of surrounding farms for homes and businesses to be built on. Although I lived in Crystal Lake from 1978-1994, I eventually settled in Woodstock, choosing to live there and commute to Crystal Lake for certain things, just as others have been doing for many years.

I hope you have enjoyed reminiscing about these Crystal Lake businesses. This project grew much larger than I originally anticipated. Although not meant to be all inclusive, I think the reader will have found a broad amount of Crystal Lake business history, which I hope has been informative and brought them many happy memories.

Kimberly A. Mace
Woodstock, IL
February 2021

Member of McHenry County IL Genealogical & Historical Societies